

A PUBLICATION OF THE MARYLAND STATE LAW LIBRARY

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INCORPORATING THE PEOPLE'S LAW LIBRARY WEBSITE INTO THE STATE LAW LIBRARY'S SERVICES

BY STEVE ANDERSON

The Maryland State Law Library recently assumed responsibility for the management of the [People's Law Library](#) website. This award winning self-help website, designed to assist the public in finding legal information, offers resources on family law, housing law and many other topic areas.

The Library's first step in the transition process is to update the site, including the addition of new contact information and checking hypertext links. Due to the efforts of the Library's web content coordinator, Martine Jean, the [People's Law Library](#) now has well over one hundred web pages that have been updated in the last two months. The Library will begin a more comprehensive review of the site in the coming months after the initial round of updates has been completed. The Library will pay special attention to integrating the site with other Judiciary information sources.

The State Law Library hopes to continue the site's partnership with stakeholder public interest legal organizations that provided significant content in the past. Stakeholders will be invited to join an advisory committee to assist in the further development of information on the site. The [People's Law Library](#), first launched in 1996, has been continuously supported by community groups and public interest legal organizations, such as Maryland Legal Aid, which was a major partner in the development and maintenance of the site. Library staff members plan to attend the [Maryland Partners for Justice Conference](#) on June 4th and have an opportunity to discuss the website with the legal community.

Nationally, citizen-oriented legal information websites, which are administered by state judiciaries, are part of the growing trend of improving access to the courts. Several state court systems, as wide-ranging as California and Iowa, manage in-depth legal information websites geared for the public. While other judiciary departments typically administer these sites, the acquisition of the [People's Law Library](#) marks the first instance in which a state law library maintains the site. The State Law Library is proud to be part of this effort and is optimistic about further enhancements to the site.

THE MARYLAND STATE LAW LIBRARY: A KEY RESOURCE FOR SMALL FIRMS AND SOLO PRACTITIONERS

BY RUDOLF B. LAMY

Are you working in a small firm or as a solo practitioner? Have you ever been unexpectedly assigned to a defendant whose case does not match your usual area of legal expertise? Are you handling a *pro bono* case that you need to study up for? Are you handling a legal emergency for friends or family? Were you working in your office when your power went out or your laptop battery died?

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," you'll need a friendly law librarian to assist you. The Maryland State Law Library has an unmatched array of legal resources that you can put to good use quickly and efficiently.

The Library provides FREE in-the-Library access to online sources including Lexis, Loislaw, BNA, CCH and many other sources of both legal and news-related information. If for some reason you cannot connect to the web, or if your preference is to work with the "official" sources, the Library has statutes and reporters covering not only Maryland and the other 49 states but Federal resources as well. Some information sources are not online; the Library holds a vast array of hardcopy, secondary sources including form books, treatises, CLE materials and law reviews.

The Library has an extensive collection of superseded Maryland state codes, rules and session laws. The Library staff can help you trace a statute back in time from the present code to the very beginnings of Maryland law if you require it.

The Library also holds the state's most extensive collection of current and superseded county and municipal codes from throughout Maryland. We can also show you how to access current editions of many of Maryland's local codes free through the web.

The Library provides in-house access to CLE materials published by MIPEL, NBI and Lorman. The CLE materials available in the Library cover both the latest Maryland specific and general law topics.

The Library also offers appellate case information. Court of Appeals records and briefs are available on microfiche from 1980 through 2006; similar materials from the Court of Special Appeals span 1979 through 2005. Unreported opinions from the Court of Special Appeals since 1988 also are available on microfiche.

Legislative history materials are also available here for you. General Assembly "Bill Files" on microfilm cover the years 1976 through the beginning of 1995. The Library also has hardcopy resources such as Gubernatorial Task Force Reports, House and Senate Journals and Committee Reports that both supplement and compliment the microfilm files.

The Library can also provide you access to materials that will assist you in areas of law that may be new to you. Federal, admiralty and appellate law and practice materials are all here at the State Law Library for your use.

Perhaps you'll find yourself in need of news articles or government publications to provide some background or context to a case. The State Law Library has newspapers, works on Maryland history, and federal and state government documents that may provide valuable insight into your particular case.

Don't assume that what we have in our computers or on our shelves is all we have to offer you. If we don't have what you want, we can access an international network of law, academic and public libraries to get what you need. For those practitioners who need to borrow materials directly from other firms or libraries, the Library offers free searches of the OCLC database, which is a catalog of library catalogs from throughout the world. We can tell you which libraries own what you are looking for. The Library also offers an interlibrary loan service, borrowing materials from other libraries for you. However, those materials will be restricted to use here in the Library. Either way, the Library brings you timely and affordable access to a exceptionally wide variety of resources.

The Library, of course, offers standard photocopying and laserprinting services, for a nominal charge. If you can't get to the Library, and you know what document you need, we can scan and e-mail, fax or mail information directly to your home or office. Information about these services is available on our [Copy Request page](#).

With over 100 years of combined research experience, the staff at MSLL is ready to assist you with all your research questions. Anyone needing assistance is invited to contact the Library, by phone (410-260-1430; 888-216-8156) or e-mail (mdlaw.library@mdcourts.gov).

WHERE ARE ALL THE MUNICIPAL CODES GOING?

BY DEE VAN NEST

In our efforts to maintain current local codes, we are curious to see what changes will occur within the next few years. Recently, we noticed a trend that concerns us: the publication of "online only" codes present difficulties for the longterm preservation of municipal information.

Increasingly, Maryland's 157 municipalities are producing online versions of their codes and zoning regulations. Online codes are generally less expensive to produce, easier to supplement and provide free access to anyone needing quick information. In addition, the online version is generally the most up-to-date code available. Although we are thankful that online codes are convenient for researchers, we are concerned about the fact that "online only" codes (and there are now several, it appears) currently do not produce a "paper trail" of superseded ordinances and regulations. In 2010, how will one locate a 2001 zoning regulation that was changed in 2005?

Over the years, the Maryland State Law Library has amassed a large print collection of superseded pages from county and municipal codes. We are one of the few libraries with such a collection. If, however, a code exists only online and under copyright, then historical information likely will not be preserved for future generations. Therefore, we in the library community hope that municipalities will find ways, either in print or through digital preservation processes, to ensure that this information is available in the future.

PIXELS

BY MARY JO LAZUN

New Online Database—Index to Legal Periodicals

The Library recently purchased the online version of the **Index to Legal Periodicals**. The **Index to Legal Periodicals (ILP)**, published by the H.W. Wilson company, is the oldest index to legal publications in the United States. Of course, the Library has subscribed to the print version for years, but only recently has the entire index, dating back to 1908, been available online. The significance of this resource is the ability to have topical access to thousands of historic articles from law reviews and bar journals. Using **ILP** online a comprehensive legal periodicals search is a reality.

To make **ILP** even more useful, the Library has linked it to the Library's other full-text databases. So not only is a comprehensive search possible, it is likely that full-text will also be available. If an article is not available in full text directly from **ILP**, look for the link titled "MSLL Journal Portal." This link will open up a new web page that shows what other journal databases (like HeinOnline, LegalTrac, Westlaw) have full-text. One more click and you are at the journal site.

While the basic search is powerful, the "advanced search" allows limiting searches by date, title, author, case, journal name and many others. There is also an option to limit the search to only full-text. The library strongly advises against using this feature because the database only knows what full text is available in ILP. For example a "Smart Search" on "capital punishment" with the "Limit to Full Text Articles" turned on, returns only 67 records; remove this limit and over 440 records are retrieved. It is likely that many of these additional records are available in full-text via Hein, LegalTrac or Westlaw.

ILP has also updated its old subject headings. For example, if you search for "Employer and employee" it will pick up articles that used the old subject heading of "Master and servant." Of course the reverse is true if you search on the old subject heading of "Interpretation and construction" you will pick up the new heading of "Statutory interpretation."

ILP is available at the Library's public access workstations and to Judiciary employees on the JIS network. The quickest way for Judiciary employees to get there is via our [CourtNet page](#). For more information, or assistance using this database, please contact the Library's Information Desk at 410-260-1430.

NEW FACES AND POSITIONS AT THE LAW LIBRARY

BY STEVE ANDERSON

There have been a few personnel changes at the Library in recent months. Donna Wiesinger, the Library's former Head of Electronic Services, relocated to sunny Florida, where she is now the Head of Technical Services at the Barry University School of Law Library in Orlando. The State Law Library staff wishes her the best in her new position.

Consequently, Mary Jo Lazun recently accepted a promotion to serve as the State Law Library's new Head of Electronic Services. Mary Jo has been on staff as a Research/State Publications Librarian since December 2005. As one can see from the previous article, she already has been working diligently in managing the Library's database resources.

The open State Publications Librarian position will be filled by Katherine Baer, effective April 23rd. Katherine has been a contractual Research Librarian at the Library since last October. With extensive experience as a news librarian, Katherine has acclimated herself well to legal literature, and the Library staff is pleased to extend to her a long welcome.

Evening and Saturday reference shifts will continue to be expertly covered by Carole Roche, who joined the Library team last Fall. Carole is an attorney by training and is completing her master's degree in library science.

Martine Jean, the new Web Content Coordinator for the People's Law Library, joined the staff in January. With a variety of technical and legal experience, Martine will be graduating from the University of Baltimore School of Law in May. This new contractual position is challenging, but Martine is enjoying improving the content available on this valuable service.

Staff members in these new positions are enthusiastic about the service and expertise they can offer to Library users. The next time you need legal information assistance, please remember to count on the expert staff at the State Law Library.

CONFERENCE OF MARYLAND COURT LAW LIBRARY DIRECTORS CREATED

BY STEVE ANDERSON

Last month, Chief Judge Robert M. Bell, in an administrative [order](#), created the Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors, which formalizes a representative body to advise the Judiciary on law library and legal information matters. The Conference will address court library management and leadership, such as library standards, coordination of collection development, public services and enhancing libraries' roles as partners in providing access to justice through education and the provision of legal information.

The roots for the new conference are found in the [2001 Circuit Court Libraries Study Report](#). That report called for [recommended standards](#) for circuit court libraries, which were adapted from the [County Public Law Library Standards](#) of the American Association of Law Libraries, as well as systematic attempts to improve library collections and services in less populous counties as a means for providing more equitable access to legal information throughout Maryland.

Since then, circuit court libraries and the State Law Library have come together for frequent discussions about how to coordinate and collaborate in significant efforts to improve collections and services. Catherine McGuire, the State Law Library's Outreach Services Librarian and whose position was a recommendation of the Report, has spearheaded the Library's annual grant program. These grants are designed to assist counties in meeting current standards for collections, services and equipment. For the last several years, a group of library directors has been meeting quarterly to confer on other elements envisioned in the report: a new list of recommended legal treatises, an analysis of local court rules pertaining to libraries and revisions to library standards. Recently, discussions have included ways to streamline communications with other court departments and provide information on library user needs in order to improve information on the [People's Law Library](#).

Members of the Conference look forward to working together and promoting their libraries' services to the public and to other Judiciary departments. The Conference's first chair, Joan Bellistri, Director of the Anne Arundel County Public Law Library, and vice chair, Janet Camillo, Director of the Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library, will guide the new organization with vision and dedication.